

Right Now

Florida Court Rules ObamaCare Unconstitutional

I want to let you know about another important development in the efforts to [repeal ObamaCare](#). Recently a federal judge – this time a federal district court judge in Florida – ruled that the new health care law's requirement that nearly every American purchase government-sanctioned health insurance, even if they can't afford it, is unconstitutional. In the case brought by 26 States, the National Federation of Independent Business, and two individuals, Judge Roger Vinson held that the individual mandate is not a constitutional exercise of Congress' Commerce Clause power. Additionally, in an important development, Judge Vinson struck down the entire law citing the lack of a severability clause, meaning that if one part of the law is found to be unconstitutional, the entire law is deemed unconstitutional. This is the

[second time](#)

a federal judge has determined that the federal government does not have the constitutional authority to require every American to buy government-approved health insurance. The ruling is another firm rebuke of Obamacare and strikes at the core of the law's infringement on individual freedom. I believe we must keep fighting to overturn Obamacare and replace it with real health care reforms that lower costs while preserving Americans' constitutional freedoms.

[Share your thoughts](#)

House Takes First Step to Cut 2011 Spending

The House of Representatives has [directed](#) that discretionary spending in fiscal year 2011 (FY 2011) be reduced to FY 2008 spending levels or less after the current FY 2011 spending bill expires in March. This represents about \$60 billion in savings through September 30, the end of the fiscal year. I supported this resolution as a good first step but I believe that we need to do more. Before the fiscal year began last October, Republicans committed to return to FY08 levels of spending, which translated into \$100 billion in FY 2011 savings. While it is naturally more difficult to achieve this level of savings now considering that only about seven months will remain in the fiscal year and that the previous majority kept the first five months of FY 2011 spending at record levels, I joined 88 of my fellow strong fiscal conservatives in [urging](#)

new House Speaker John Boehner to continue to pursue at least \$100 billion in savings. In contrast, in the State of the Union, President Obama proposed a spending freeze for the next five years, which I believe is simply inadequate. To tackle our debt crisis, I will continue to fight for substantial cuts in federal spending for this year and the years to come.

[Share your thoughts](#)

House Passes Repeal of ObamaCare

Recently the House passed legislation to repeal ObamaCare in its entirety. I spoke before the House in support of repeal and I want to take the opportunity to share my remarks with you. You can read the full text of my comments [here](#). House passage is the beginning of a longer battle to repeal ObamaCare, but one that I will not rest from until we are successful. The House has also instructed committees that oversee health care issues, including the Ways & Means Committee on which I serve, to develop solutions that will bring down health care costs without growing government, hurting the economy or exacerbating our long-term, crippling debt. As a starting point for this effort, I have reintroduced the

[“Reform Americans Can Afford Act,”](#)

a measure that had the full support of Republican leadership in the last Congress. I believe it is important that House Republicans also advance common sense free market solutions that will lower health care costs for American families and small businesses without growing government.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Ways & Means Committee Hearing Touts Benefits of Trade

Recently I participated in a Ways and Means Committee [hearing](#) on the pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Afterward I recorded a [video](#)

with my immediate reaction to the hearing. These trade agreements would remove barriers to U.S. exports abroad, leveling the playing field for U.S. goods and services. Northern California workers, farmers, small businesses and manufacturers stand to gain a great deal from the agreements. As one of nation's richest agricultural regions, passing these agreements would clearly lead to more export opportunities for our producers—and more jobs both on and off the farm in our communities including transportation workers, processors, packers, sales and marketing workers and other administrative staff. Passing them without further delay is a clear-cut way to create good jobs and boost economic growth.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Recent Past

New Majority Begins New Era of Fiscal Responsibility

I wanted to inform you of an important first step in making Congress more transparent and fiscally responsible. As part of changing the way the House of Representatives operates, the new Republican majority passed a set of procedural rules that will make it easier to cut government spending and end the tax-and-spend mentality that has been all too typical of Congress in recent years. The centerpiece of these changes is a “cut-as-you-go” rule that prevents the House from considering bills that increase federal spending on entitlement programs unless they cut spending on other federal programs by an equal or greater amount. The new House rules also include a provision that will stop the use of budgetary gimmicks that have been used to hide the real cost of legislation, such as we saw with last year's health care law. The cost of a bill will be measured over a 50-year period, instead of the current 10-year requirement. Americans can't play these games with their household budgets, and neither should Congress.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Report Confirms ObamaCare Set to Eliminate Medicare Advantage Plans for North State Residents

One of the many serious flaws of the new health law is that it will result in millions of senior citizens losing their current Medicare Advantage health plans. According to a [study](#) published last fall by the Heritage Foundation, by the time Obamacare is fully implemented in 2017, approximately 7.4 million seniors will have been forced out of their Medicare plan. The Heritage analysis also found that Shasta County, California, would have the second-highest Medicare Advantage enrollment loss of any county in the United States – a nearly 75% drop. This is unacceptable and contradicts President Obama's promise that his plan would improve access to care and coverage. Many seniors have found that Medicare Advantage plans are a cost-effective way to obtain benefits that are not available under the traditional Medicare program, and I believe these choices should continue to be available to seniors regardless of what region of the country they live in.

[Share your thoughts](#)

NEW E-Update List – "Constitution and Government Reform"

I want to invite you to [sign up](#) to receive periodic e-updates on issues relating to the Constitution and Government Reform. Like many Northern Californians, I have grown increasingly concerned that Congress, the President, and federal courts have too frequently exceeded their constitutional powers. I believe the health care law passed last year, which for the first time in our history mandates that nearly every American purchase a certain commercial product, is a prime example of Washington lawmakers exceeding the powers provided to them by the Constitution. Likewise, the Supreme Court and other federal courts have repeatedly overstepped their constitutional role by legislating from the bench. With these concerns in mind, I invite you to sign up for e-updates on the Constitution and Government Reform. I look forward to keeping you informed on efforts by the new Republican majority to ensure that neither Congress nor the President exceeds their constitutional powers. If you are interested in signing up to receive e-updates on the Constitution and Government Reform, click

[here](#)

. It will take just a moment to do so.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Northern California News and Events

Working to Overturn the Forest Service's Misguided Travel Policy

As many of you are aware, national forests in our Northern California Congressional District have been in the process of implementing travel management plans for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on public lands. Instead of coming up with reasonable regulations to better balance OHV-use with other forest users, the agency has used this policy as yet another tool to restrict access to your federal lands. In addition to eliminating upwards of 90 percent of the routes previously utilized by OHVs, the Forest Service has chosen to classify gravel roads, known as "maintenance-level 3" (ML-3) roads, as "highways," effectively banning OHV-use despite state and local authorities allowing such on similarly-surfaced roads outside the boundary of Forest Service lands.

Going back nearly two years, I and several other representatives have repeatedly [asked](#) the Forest Service to change course and work with our local communities and OHV-users on a balanced approach. Despite our best efforts, the agency has continued to move forward with implementing travel management plans in the face of overwhelming opposition. For these reasons, I have introduced legislation, H.R. 242, which would prohibit the Forest Service from moving forward with the plan until it has considered adding additional routes that were previously taken off the table, and prohibit ML-3 roads to be designated as "highways." I look forward to working with the new majority in the House of Representatives on passage of this legislation and other commonsense policies to ensure full and open access to our national forests and other public lands.

[Share your thoughts](#)

VA Secretary Pledges More Staff at Oakland Regional Office

In [November](#) , I contacted the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to express my strong concern that the Oakland Regional Office was no longer processing Notice of Disagreements (NODs). A NOD is submitted by a veteran if their initial disability claim is rejected and they wish to appeal that decision. I wanted to share the [reply](#) I recently received from VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. Secretary Shinseki acknowledged that there was a decline in NOD processing because some members of the Oakland appeals processing team were out on extended medical leave, while others were reassigned to assist in processing disability claims related to exposure to Agent Orange. Importantly, he assured me that the Veterans Benefits Administration has taken action to increase the staffing level assigned to the Oakland Regional Office's appeals team. While I am pleased that staffing will increase, please know that I will continue to closely monitor this situation to ensure that the Oakland office processes NODs from Northern California veterans in a timely manner.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Local Civil Air Patrol Cadets Honored



[Share your thoughts](#)



[Share your thoughts](#)